



# CHESTER

## Hampden County



[NARRATIVE](#)  
[GEOGRAPHY](#)  
[GOVERNMENT](#)  
[DEMOGRAPHICS](#)  
[HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS](#)  
[TRANSPORTATION](#)  
[CULTURE AND RECREATION](#)  
[MISCELLANEOUS](#)



## NARRATIVE

### **Narrative**

Chester, during the late 30's to the 60's, was a small prospering rural community with several flourishing industries: a granite quarry, a stone shed for working the granite, an emery mill now the General Abrasive Treibacker Inc., and the Cortland Grinding Wheels Company. With the exception of the emery mill, which employs about a dozen workers, these industries no longer exist. However the Bannish Lumber Company, established 25 years ago, provides employment and revenue for the town. Chester has changed and has begun to grow in other areas, utilizing its location in the foothills of the Berkshires and its natural features. Similar to other hilltowns, Chester has a market for homes, both year around and seasonal. Enterprises such as blueberry farms, maple sugaring, growing produce for local markets, and bed and breakfast accommodations have developed.

The restoration of the Boston and Albany Railroad station by interested local people has added to the attraction of the town. An annual Railroad Day has been established, bringing many visitors.

The Miniature Theatre of Chester, established under the direction of Vincent Dowling, formerly of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, is a summer attraction not only for Chester but also western Massachusetts. Chester gains stimulation and growth from its natural resources, location and inhabitants. Like other communities, small and large, the Town of Chester will grow and change with changes in the state's and region's economy and shifts in population.

Chester, known as "The Gem of the Valley", is felt by its residents to be a beautiful rural community with hopes for continued growth and improvement.

(Narrative supplied by community)



# GEOGRAPHY

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## Location

Western Massachusetts, bordered by Huntington on the east, Worthington and Middlefield on the north, Becket on the west, and Blandford on the south. Chester is 30 miles southeast of Pittsfield; 30 miles northwest of Springfield; 115 miles west of Boston; 70 miles from Albany, New York; and 140 miles from New York City.

**Total Area:** 37.13 sq. miles

**Land Area:** 36.73 sq. miles

**Population:** 1,280

**Density:** 35 per sq. mile

## Climate

(National Climatic Data Center)

(Knightville Dam Station)

Normal temperature in January.....20.1°F

Normal temperature in July.....68.7°F

Normal annual precipitation.....45.1"

## U.S.G.S. Topographical Plates

Chester, Blandford, Becket

## Regional Planning Agency

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

## Metropolitan Statistical Area

(1993 Definition)



# GOVERNMENT

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## Municipal Offices

Main Number: (413) 354-7760

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

## Form of Government

Board of Selectmen

Administrative Assistant

Open Town Meeting

## Year Incorporated

As a town: 1783

## Registered Voters (Secretary of State 1994)

	Number	%	
Total Registered	796		
Democrats	146	18.3	%
Republicans	98	12.3	%
Other parties	0	0.0	%
Unenrolled Voters	552	69.3	%

## Legislators

[Senators and Representatives by City and Town](#)



# DEMOGRAPHICS

**Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000**

Geographic Area: Chester town, Hampden County, Massachusetts

[For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see text]

Subject	Number	Percent	Subject	Number	Percent
Total population.....	1,308	100.0	HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE		
SEX AND AGE			Total population.....	1,308	100.0
Male.....	673	51.5	Hispanic or Latino (of any race).....	17	1.3
Female.....	635	48.5	Mexican.....	1	0.1
Under 5 years.....	72	5.5	Puerto Rican.....	7	0.5
5 to 9 years.....	77	5.9	Cuban.....	-	-
10 to 14 years.....	112	8.6	Other Hispanic or Latino.....	9	0.7
15 to 19 years.....	99	7.6	Not Hispanic or Latino.....	1,291	98.7
20 to 24 years.....	62	4.7	White alone.....	1,279	97.8
25 to 34 years.....	119	9.1	RELATIONSHIP		
35 to 44 years.....	276	21.1	Total population.....	1,308	100.0
45 to 54 years.....	213	16.3	In households.....	1,308	100.0
55 to 59 years.....	74	5.7	Householder.....	500	38.2
60 to 64 years.....	54	4.1	Spouse.....	300	22.9
65 to 74 years.....	83	6.3	Child.....	411	31.4
75 to 84 years.....	55	4.2	Own child under 18 years.....	308	23.5
85 years and over.....	12	0.9	Other relatives.....	32	2.4
Median age (years).....	39.4	(X)	Under 18 years.....	10	0.8
18 years and over.....	981	75.0	Nonrelatives.....	65	5.0
Male.....	496	37.9	Unmarried partner.....	36	2.8
Female.....	485	37.1	In group quarters.....	-	-
21 years and over.....	934	71.4	Institutionalized population.....	-	-
62 years and over.....	183	14.0	Noninstitutionalized population.....	-	-
65 years and over.....	150	11.5	HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE		
Male.....	67	5.1	Total households.....	500	100.0
Female.....	83	6.3	Family households (families).....	361	72.2
RACE			With own children under 18 years.....	175	35.0
One race.....	1,298	99.2	Married-couple family.....	300	60.0
White.....	1,285	98.2	With own children under 18 years.....	138	27.6
Black or African American.....	2	0.2	Female householder, no husband present.....	38	7.6
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	6	0.5	With own children under 18 years.....	27	5.4
Asian.....	1	0.1	Nonfamily households.....	139	27.8
Asian Indian.....	-	-	Householder living alone.....	106	21.2
Chinese.....	-	-	Householder 65 years and over.....	43	8.6
Filipino.....	1	0.1	Households with individuals under 18 years.....	187	37.4
Japanese.....	-	-	Households with individuals 65 years and over.....	106	21.2
Korean.....	-	-	Average household size.....	2.62	(X)
Vietnamese.....	-	-	Average family size.....	3.06	(X)
Other Asian <sup>1</sup> .....	-	-	HOUSING OCCUPANCY		
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	-	-	Total housing units.....	580	100.0
Native Hawaiian.....	-	-	Occupied housing units.....	500	86.2
Guamanian or Chamorro.....	-	-	Vacant housing units.....	80	13.8
Samoa.....	-	-	For seasonal, recreational, or		
Other Pacific Islander <sup>2</sup> .....	-	-	occasional use.....	52	9.0
Some other race.....	4	0.3	Homeowner vacancy rate (percent).....	1.2	(X)
Two or more races.....	10	0.8	Rental vacancy rate (percent).....	6.7	(X)
Race alone or in combination with one			HOUSING TENURE		
or more other races: <sup>3</sup>			Occupied housing units.....	500	100.0
White.....	1,295	99.0	Owner-occupied housing units.....	417	83.4
Black or African American.....	4	0.3	Renter-occupied housing units.....	83	16.6
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	12	0.9	Average household size of owner-occupied units.....	2.72	(X)
Asian.....	1	0.1	Average household size of renter-occupied units.....	2.11	(X)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	-	-			
Some other race.....	6	0.5			

- Represents zero or rounds to zero. (X) Not applicable.

<sup>1</sup> Other Asian alone, or two or more Asian categories.

<sup>2</sup> Other Pacific Islander alone, or two or more Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander categories.

<sup>3</sup> In combination with one or more of the other races listed. The six numbers may add to more than the total population and the six percentages may add to more than 100 percent because individuals may report more than one race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.



# HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

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**Home Sales** (Banker & Tradesman) -

[Town Stats - Free market Statistics](#)

**Subsidized Housing Units** (DHCD 1998)

[DHCD Subsidized Housing Inventory](#)

Subsidized Housing Units: The number of housing units which count toward the municipality's 10% goal for low- and moderate-income housing. It includes both subsidized affordable units and market rate units in certain eligible subsidized developments.

**Public Housing Units** (DHCD 1999)

Conventional State: 0

Conventional Federal: 0

**Rental Assistance**(DHCD 1999)

State (MRVP): 0

Federal (Section 8): 0



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# TRANSPORTATION

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## TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS

Chester is located between the Berkshires and the Pioneer Valley. The town has good access to the airport and rail facilities of the latter region, due to its location along U.S. Route 20.

### Major Highways

The principal highway is U.S. Route 20, which crosses the southern section of Chester from east to west. It intersects the north-south State Route 112 just southeast of the town. The Massachusetts Turnpike (Interstate Route 90) passes just south of Chester.

### Rail

Conrail provides freight rail service in Chester. Contact number: (617) 783-6222

### Bus

Chester is not affiliated with any regional transit authority.

### Other

Barnes Municipal Airport, a General Aviation (GA) facility located in Westfield, is accessible from Chester. It has a 5,000' x 100' asphalt runway. Instrument approaches available: Precision and non-Precision.



# CULTURE AND RECREATION

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## LIBRARIES

[Board of Library Commissioners On-line Library Catalog](#)

## MUSEUMS

(American Association of Museums)

None

## RECREATION

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

**Recreational Facilities** (Recreational sites and activities)

[Department of Environmental Management Recreation Section](#)



# MISCELLANEOUS

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## HEALTH FACILITIES

(Dept. of Public Health 1992)

### Hospitals

None

### Long Term Care

None

### Hospices

None

### Rest Homes

None

### UTILITIES

[Telephone Numbers for Public Utilities](#)



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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NOTE: The COMMUNITY PROFILE draws information from a diversity of sources. The main source of information is listed under each section. In some instances comments submitted by the municipality were incorporated to correct and/or enhance the information obtained from the main source. However, no changes were made to those data bases which must be consistent throughout the state. DHCD has made efforts to ensure the accuracy of all data in the COMMUNITY PROFILES, but cannot take responsibility for any consequences arising from the use of the information contained in this document.